

Dispenser eases labeling tedium

Bogged down doing battle with address labels? The Dispensa-matic label dispenser will take some of the tedium out of the task.

Available from Commercial Mailing Accessories Inc. of St. Louis, this sturdy motor-driven device allows you to affix labels one by one as fast as you can pick them up and slap them on an envelope.

Model U-45, which costs \$325, accepts rolls of stickers or fan-fold sheets of labels that are up to 4½ inches wide. Once threaded and plugged in, the machine offers labels one at a time by peeling away the waxed-paper backing.

The labels come off the sheet straight and flat, not curled, so it's easy to apply them with one hand — leaving the other free to move the papers you're working on.

You can stick 1,500 to 2,500 labels an hour with the Dispensa-matic, according to the manufacturer. The company says the machine can more than quadruple the number of labels you can peel and apply without it. An efficient, dexterous operator may be able to



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achieve those results, but I found that it cut the time I spent fiddling with labels by about half.

Just as important, though, it makes the job of affixing labels a lot less tedious by eliminating the need to get your finger nail under the label edge, peel the label off, and uncurl it with two hands. Instead, you can just pick up the label with one finger and affix it with one clean stroke.

Some other strong features:

■ The 8-pound Dispensa-matic is built to work long hours and last a long time. It has a heavy metal casing, a sturdy on-off switch and a fan-cooled motor. No plastic here.

■ The unit is simply designed and constructed. Even without the set-up instructions, it's readily ap-

parent how to operate the dispenser.

■ It's easy to adjust the size of the paper tracks so that any labels up to 4½ inches wide can be dispensed.

A take-up spool equipped with an oversized clip rolls up the waxed-



paper backing from the labels, keeping the labeling area tidy.

On the downside, one day it went bonkers and refused to pause and let me catch up to it. And like every other piece of office equipment, the Dispensa-matic needs someone to learn how to use it and show others. It's another gadget to integrate into your daily routine.

Also, the device requires an electric outlet, which may be an inconvenience depending on your mailing operation set-up.

The manufacturer also offers 6-inch, 8½-inch and 16-inch models.

At \$695, the 16-inch model can handle the widest of computer fan-fold paper, handling up to four or five labels across.

Other units are available to handle stickers that may be as big as bumper stickers.

One model, the D-5, lets you load up to five different rolls of stickers for automatic dispensing. Manual units that advance the paper with a twist knob also are available at less cost, but they operate much more slowly.

The bottom line: At \$325 for the 4½-inch model I've been using, I can see where the sticker price on this powered gadget seems a bit high for such a specific task. But if you affix more than 1,000 each month, I think you'll find the Dispensa-matic a welcome addition to the office.

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